

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all claims under examination is submitted, and the status of each is identified. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended): A method of producing an amide from the corresponding nitrile comprising the following steps,

- i) providing a microorganism capable of producing a nitrile hydratase biocatalyst,
- ii) culturing the microorganism in a growth medium ,
- iii) storing the microorganism,
- iv) contacting the nitrile with the microorganism in an aqueous medium and thereby converting the nitrile to the amide,

wherein the microorganism is stored in step iii) in a storage medium that comprises water and the growth medium in step ii) without recovery of the microorganism using centrifugation or filtration as a non-actively growing culture in ~~a the storage medium that comprises water and any residual fermentation broth components~~ and the term non-actively growing culture means that the metabolism in the microorganism cells is substantially zero.

2-4. (cancelled).

5. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 in which the amide is an ethylenically unsaturated amide.

6. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 in which the growth medium comprised in the storage medium of step iii) comprises urea or a urea derivative.

7. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 in which the microorganism is stored at a temperature above the freezing point of the storage medium.

8. (previously presented); A method according to claim 1 in which the microorganism is stored for a period of at least 2 days.

9. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 in which the microorganism is of the *Rhodococcus* genus.

10. (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 in which the microorganism is *Rhodococcus rhodochrous* NCIMB 41164.

11. (previously presented): A method according to claim 9 in which the microorganism is of the *Rhodococcus rhodochrous* species.

12. (cancelled).